



Date: February 6, 2004

To: Workforce Development Board Executive Directors, Youth Program Managers/Lead Contacts, One-Stop Operators and Job Centers

From: Connie Colussy, Director
Bureau of Workforce Programs

Subject: **Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Policy Update 04-01 -- Accessibility to Title I Youth Services through Job Centers**

Purpose:

To provide guidance to local area Workforce Development Boards, (WDBs), Job Center staff, One-Stop operators and Youth Councils on how to improve accessibility to Title I youth services through Job Centers.

Policy/Legislative References:

- WIA legislation (section 129)(c)(3)(i)(ii), (section 121)(b)(1)(i), WIA regulations 20 CFR 664.400(d), 664.405(d), 664.700-710 and Department of Labor (DOL) Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) NO. 18-00(6)(G)(3)(4)
- Department of Workforce Development (DWD)/Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) WIA Program Guide, Part 2(III)(Q)(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)

Background:

In 1994, Congress passed the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) to help all states provide students with academic and technical skills necessary to qualify for postsecondary education and entry into the workforce of the 21st Century. Wisconsin was one of the first eight states to receive Federal STWOA dollars. The state's School-to-Work system focused on school-based learning, work-based learning and connecting activities. Those activities included a statewide approach to integrating career information and counseling supported in part through 11 youth career centers located in Ashland, Fox Cities, Milwaukee, West Bend, Green Bay, LaCrosse, Madison, Pewaukee, Racine, Watertown and Wausau. The youth career centers were specifically designed to provide youth access to comprehensive career education, job training information and the state's job center system. The centers were also required to coordinate services with the counseling and guidance activities and local school district's Education and Employment Program.

At about the same time, Wisconsin was developing its youth career center system. Wisconsin also received a Department of Labor (DOL) One-Stop Initiative grant to develop its one-stop system, known as Job Centers in Wisconsin. This grant enabled Wisconsin to establish many of its Job Centers before WIA required them in each state. Because the One-Stop Initiative grant focused on adult customers, most of Wisconsin's Job Centers did not have outreach efforts to attract youth, pursue youth program partnerships, or provide youth services.

Under WIA legislation and regulations, the WIA Title I youth program is a required one-stop/Job Center partner. Job Centers are expected to provide information and services previously available to youth through career centers. States are expected to ensure local one-stop systems look for ways to better incorporate youth programs, develop a broader array of youth services and reach out to a wider range of youth program partners. Local boards are required to ensure Job Centers meet WIA referral requirements for WIA income-eligible youth. This includes providing these youth with information regarding the full array of applicable or appropriate services available through Job Centers.

During the period from January 27 through March 7, 2003, the US Department of Labor (DOL) reviewed Wisconsin's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs, including its WIA Title I youth programs. It observed Wisconsin's Job Centers lack youth-related services and information, specifically noting that staff (for various youth programs and at one-stops) are "not knowledgeable about the array of services available for youth through WIA or other agencies, and written materials are not readily available about these services." To correct these weaknesses, the US DOL suggested the State should "prompt local areas, one-stop operators, and youth councils to become better informed about the full array of youth services in their areas and to prepare written materials about these services."

Policy:

Consistent with WIA legislation and regulations, Workforce Development Boards should ensure that information about youth programs/services is available at Wisconsin Job Centers. WDBs are also encouraged to provide access through Job Centers to other youth services to the extent possible.

The following are suggestions Workforce Development Boards should consider to ensure youth have access to WIA Title I services through Wisconsin Job Centers.

- Include provisions for assisting youth programs into the MOUs of One-Stop Partners
- Use resource mapping, focus groups, meetings and youth or community summits to gather information on the needs of young people in the community
- Build and maintain a network of people, agencies, schools, and organizations in the community that are committed to serving youth
- Use this network to develop and/or gather information/materials useful in One-Stops
- Provide a separate area just for youth related program information/materials
- Possible information about organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, 4-H, Technical/Four-year Colleges, health services, church activities, Teen Centers, After School Programs, Tutoring, Mentoring, etc.
- Provide a bulletin board to post workshop and training opportunities or other information just pertaining to youth
- Provide training for Job Center staff and service providers to make them more knowledgeable of youth issues and ways to address them
- Add a link to web site devoted just for youth
- Ensure resource rooms have materials/resources that are appealing to youth
- Train/inform staff at the front desk how to assist young people locate youth staff
- Develop a survey available to youth in the Job Centers to see if the materials/information is having an impact

The following are Internet resources that provide more information and suggestions on how to incorporate youth services into a Job Center.

<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/onestop/careercenter/online/revgui.htm>

<http://www.careeronestop.com/>

<http://www.workingforamerica.org>

<http://www.promising-practices.org>

<http://www.onestops.info/>

<http://www.nyec.org/pepnet/>

Questions and Technical Assistance:

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the DWD Local Liaison assigned to your area.

cc: Local Program Liaisons

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